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SOME PLAY-PARTY GAMES OF THE MIDDLE WEST.

BY EDWIN F. PIPER.

THE old ring-games were familiar forty years ago to village folk and country folk throughout Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska. Now only an occasional quiet country nook, where musicians and music-machines are few, or where the church still bans the fiddle and the two-step, shelters them. In such a retired district, in unfavorable weather, young folk at a party may devote themselves to "fruit-basket" and charades within doors; but on moonlight nights in spring and fall they prefer "Skip to my Lou" and "Miller Boy" on the grass in the yard.

Frontier settlements continually revive these pastimes; the games flourish momentarily, but die out as sophistication grows upon the social life of the community. In the new settlement, play-party amusements spring up afresh because of their simplicity. They require no organization, no management, no dancing-floor, no musician. At any gathering, and without plan or forethought, the game may be started, provided some one knows the formula and the song. If no game-song is remembered, one may be borrowed or improvised. Any voice is good enough to help with the chorus. Thus in the hearty social life of the settlement such simple pastimes are naturally renewed.

An extract from a letter seems here wholly to the point: "In our neighborhood we have a literary society that meets once in two weeks at the school-house. From twenty to sixty-five, both young and old folks, come to every meeting. We have a programme, and then the young folks, and sometimes the old folks, play games. I will give you the names of some of the games we play. They are 'Pig in the Parlor,' 'Skip-em-a-loo,' 'Happy is the Miller,' 'Needle's Eye,' 'A. B. C.,' 'Rolly-Rolly,' and 'There's a Light in the Window.'"

Here we have the characteristic neighborhood unit, the literary society at the school-house, the old games. The letter is from Montana, and is dated in 1913.

Among the games of the letter, "Needle's Eye" alone contains an osculatory formula. Forty years ago half the play-party amusements were built about some ceremony for kisses. Since games, as neighborhood property, are subject to neighborhood decrees, the kissing-round died out whenever and wherever the girls condemned it. If, in its struggle for life, the ceremony became empty, offered mere word description, no kiss, the resulting embarrassment and constraint

were in themselves fatal. "Needle's Eye," by substituting the following stanza for the one next below it, escaped the awkwardness of an hypothetical kiss:

" Because I wanted you!
Because I wanted you!
Many a lass have I let pass,
Because I wanted you."

" With a bow so neat
And a kiss so sweet,
We do intend before we end
To have this couple meet."

But though its dance and its courtship formula possessed vitality, the more lively dancing-rounds charmed away youthful hearts. As to "King William," which makes little of the dance and much of the kissing, few can remember it as the pastime of any except little children.

Most blighting in effect upon play-party diversions has been the return to the crossroads, from a term in the academy, of some arbiter to impose the verdict, "childish and countrified;" yet numerous defects more real in character brought the games under disfavor in the presence of rivals. Since in most neighborhoods a half-dozen ring-songs exhausted the list, monotony was inevitable. For the most part, the songs were so brief that stanzas must be repeated to weariness. The singing, moreover, was often thought rude, and to be commended for its good-will rather than its music. Under such imperfections, the games had to depend for their lives on the opportunities they afforded for dancing. Here the fiddler rival entered with powerful claims and charms, and the game performances perished unless church repression of the fiddler let them live.

That the neighborhood dance did not make more rapid headway in the settlements is not surprising. It had to await the coming of a musician, and, in the old days, of a "caller;" it was generally forbidden by the church; it had to fight prejudice; and it had to find suitable dancing-floor. Few dwellings afforded sufficient space; the school-house was sacred to learning, "literaries," and the political caucus. Only a large group with effective organization could afford to engage in some village a few miles off, the hall, the opera-house, or the hotel, for fortnightly dances throughout the winter. To the new country neighborhood, both numbers and organization were lacking.

Since few Protestant churches permitted dancing, dancers were in most districts adjudged irreligious. The dancing-game at play-parties, though not under sentence, was not encouraged; more often, perhaps, it was winked at by the elders, who saw in it the old folly

under a new name, yet felt that young folk must be given "wagon room." Against dancing-parties the church indiscriminately hold up the reproach of the public "bowery" frequented by rowdies at fairs and celebrations. In this general condemnation there was great injustice. Decorum at private dances depended upon host and guests. Among folk of reputation, host and floor-master prided themselves upon the courtesies as they understood them, and inspired a stiffness and formality unknown to the play-party on its moonlit grass. But there were dances and dances. The rowdy had always danced, and he conducted such parties after his taste. Any individual who deserted his crowd to take up dancing must join whatever group promoted that amusement. It might be, indeed often proved to be, one which included the rougher element. The elders, moreover, insisted that on the way to and from dances the Devil was busy. It was against such prejudice that dancing had to win adherents.

Yet, directly and indirectly, dancing continually made conquests. Once the young folk of a community began, there was no stopping them. The dance bewitched those to whom it was forbidden. At the play-party, "Lazy Mary" was forgotten, and "Skip to my Lou" prospered. The players borrowed dance-tunes, figures, and the songs which the caller used in directing some quadrilles. If complete songs were not at hand, invention supplied matter, as in "Granger," and "Meet Halfway."¹

But while the play-party, by substituting new games for old, was approximating the dance, the social growth and liberalization of the community removed obstacles to dancing itself. The rigor of church decrees was relaxed; it was conceded that respectable boys and girls might waltz and two-step; and the dance, on its merits as an amusement, supplanted in most districts the old singing-games.

That the forms in which the play-party songs survive are mangled and changeling can surprise no one who considers the matter seriously. They are continually transplanted, neglected, and supplanted. Decay and innovation have alike proved destructive. Games with strong formula are here in the better case, because they are more accurately remembered. Further, one cannot easily change the words without changing the formula in songs which describe the progress of a game. Thus the neglected "Juniper Tree" and the popular "Miller Boy" are fairly constant in form. No doubt, too, in some instances, young people found the old spirit of the game strong enough to curb temptations to local pleantry. But integrity and stability of form have depended considerably upon an inconstant factor, the memory and the spirit of persons whom we may call leaders.

¹ For this group of texts see Section II.

Every neighborhood has leaders at the play-party games. Such an individual is not elected, but merely recognized because he remembers the songs and the movements. He begins the game, sets the pattern, leads the singing. In such accretionary games as "Skip to my Lou" he thus determines what stanzas are to be sung and in what order. The wording of songs is largely under his government, and improvised stanzas perish without his approval.

In most of the dancing-games the participants feel no great devotion to the words or formulas,—rather they wish to dance. Since the brevity of the songs leads to wearisome iteration, new stanzas are welcome. Improvisation, in consequence, becoming free, expresses the exuberance of leading spirits. Accretions to the songs are local, irrelevant, facetious. Interest in the verses, though the local pleasantry may be apt and spirited and the singing full of harmony and gusto, is, however, wholly subordinated to delight in the dance.

Sometimes a party of young folk finds itself without a satisfactory singing-game. Under these circumstances, the need of voice accompaniment to the dance has brought such cheerful pieces as "Nelly Gray" and "John Brown's Body" into the play-party list.¹ The latter served for a form of the Virginia reel. For the spirit of its accretions see the text of the song. "Nelly Gray" escaped mutilation, perhaps because its length was satisfactory and all its verses familiar.

Further instances in which modern songs have been borrowed to furnish a singing accompaniment for the dance may be found in "Captain Jinks," "Down the River," "Ain't I Goin'," and "Old Dan Tucker." "Weevilly Wheat" and "Kilmacrankie" perhaps afford examples of the decay of ballad matter under the wearing usage of the singing-game.

I.

I. A. B. C.

(Montana, 1914.)

1. A. B. C. D. E. F. G.,
H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P.,
L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T.,
U. V. W. X. Y. Z.
2. Said the blackbird to the crow,
"Ain't you black, I do not know!
Ever since that you were born,
You've been tried for stealing corn."

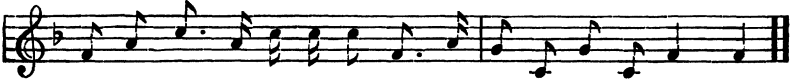
¹ Goldy M. Hamilton, in "The Play-Party in Northeast Missouri" (this Journal, vol. xxvii, pp. 289-303), prints two examples,— "Little Brown Jug" and "I went to see my Susan."

2. CHASE THAT SQUIRREL.¹

(Western Nebraska, 1891.)



Up and down the cen-tre we go! Up and down the cen-tre we go!



Up and down the cen-tre we go, This cold and frost - y morn - ing.

1. Up and down the centre we go,
Up and down the centre we go,
Up and down the centre we go,
This cold and frosty morning.
2. Now's the time to chase that squirrel,
Now's the time to chase that squirrel,
Now's the time to chase that squirrel,
This cold and frosty morning.
3. Catch her and kiss her if you can,
Catch her and kiss her if you can,
Catch her and kiss her if you can,
This cold and frosty morning.

3. DOWN IN ALABAMA.²

A.

(Western Nebraska, 1884.)

1. Old gray hoss come a tearin' out of the wilderness,
Tearin' out of the wilderness, tearin' out of the wilderness,
Old gray hoss come a tearin' out of the wilderness,
Down in Alabama.
2. Great big sheep jumped over the meetin' house,
Over the meetin' house, over the meetin' house,
Great big sheep jumped over the meetin' house,
Down in Alabama.
3. Johnny stole a ham and a piece of bacon,
Johnny stole a ham and a piece of bacon,
Johnny stole a ham and a piece of bacon,
Down in Alabama.

¹ The girls and boys in opposing ranks form a lane, up and down which the leading couple dances during Stanza 1. Then the girl runs around the rank of girls, the boy around the rank of boys. The boy attempts to overtake the girl in her dashes down the lane, — a feat not always easy, since the boys may have extended their rank to lengthen his course. For other versions see articles by Harriet L. Wedgwood and Goldy M. Hamilton in this *Journal* (vol. xxv, p. 271; and vol. xxvii, p. 303).

² Mrs. L. D. Ames (in "The Missouri Play-Party," this *Journal*, vol. xxiv, p. 311) gives another version.

B.

(Western Iowa, 1900.)

1. Johnny stole a ham, a ham, a ham,
Johnny stole a ham, a ham, a ham,
Johnny stole a ham, a ham, a ham,
Down in Alabama.
2. A great big house, and nobody living in it,
Nobody living in it, nobody living in it,
A great big house, and nobody living in it,
Down in Alabama.
3. Great big plate with a tater in the middle of it,
Tater in the middle of it, tater in the middle of it,
Great big plate with a tater in the middle of it,
Down in Alabama.

4. DOWN THE RIVER.

(Western Iowa, 1898.)

The river is up, the channel is deep,
The wind is steady but strong;
We'll splash the waves as we go by,
As we go marching along.

Down the river, O down the river,
O down the river we go!
Down the river, O down the river,
O down the Ohio!

This is an adaptation for game-song purposes of "Down the Ohio," which runs,—

The river is up, the channel is deep,
And the wind blows steady and strong;
Let the splash of our oars the music keep
As we row the old boat along.

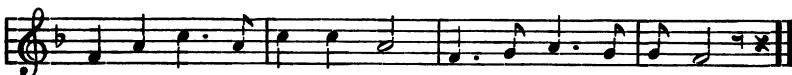
Down the river, down the river!
Down the O-hi-o-o-o-o!
Down the river, down the river!
Down the Ohio.

5. FINE BRICK HOUSE.

(Western Nebraska, 1888.)



Built my lady a fine brick house,—Built it in the gar-den;



Put her in, and she jumped out,—Fare you well, my dar-ling.

Built my lady a fine brick house,—
 Built it in the garden;
 Put her in, she jumped out,—
 Fare you well, my darling.

6. HI, COME ALONG!¹

7. HERE SITS A YOUNG MAN.¹

(Western Nebraska, 1884; tune, variant of "Lazy Mary.")

1. Here sits a young man a going to sleep,
A going to sleep, a going to sleep,
Here sits a young man a going to sleep,
So early in the morning.
2. He wants a young lady to keep him awake,
To keep him awake, to keep him awake,
He wants a young lady to keep him awake,
So early in the morning.
3. And now that you've got her you must prove true,
You must, you must, you must prove true.
Hug her a little and kiss her too,
So early in the morning.

8. JUNIPER TREE.

(Western Nebraska, 1883.)

1. O dear Sister Phoebe, how happy were we,
The night we sat under the juniper tree!
The juniper tree, heigho, heigho!
The juniper tree, heigho!
2. Come put this hat on your head, keep your head warm,
And take a sweet kiss it will do you no harm,
But a great deal of good I know, I know,
A great deal of good I know.
3. Then rise you up, Sister, go choose you a man,
Go choose you the fairest that ever you can,
Then rise you up, Sister, and go, and go,
Then rise you up, Sister, and go.
4. O dear Brother Sammy, how happy were we,
The night we sat under the juniper tree;
The juniper tree, heigho, heigho!
The juniper tree, heigho!
5. Come put this hat on your head, keep your head warm,
And take a sweet kiss it will do you no harm,
But a great deal of good I know, I know,
And a great deal of good, I know.
6. Then rise you up, Brother, go choose you a wife,
Go choose you the fairest you can for your life,
Then rise you up, Brother, and go, and go,
Then rise you up, Brother, and go.

¹ Quite distinct in tune and words from "Juniper Tree." A composite version of the two is printed in this Journal, vol. xxvii, p. 292.

9. IT RAINS AND IT HAILS.¹

(Western Nebraska, 1891.)



It rains, and it hails, and it's cold storm-y weath-er:
 In comes the farm-er, drinking up ci-der, I'll be the reap-er if
 you'll be the bind-er, I've lost my true love, and I can-not find her.

1. It rains, and it hails, and it's cold stormy weather,
 In comes the farmer drinking up cider.
 I'll be the reaper if you'll be the binder,
 I've lost my true love and I can't find her.

2. It rains, and it hails, and it's cold stormy weather,
 In comes the farmer drinking up cider.
 You be the gray horse, I'll be the rider.
 Ride down town to get some cider.

10. JOHN BROWN'S BODY.

(Western Nebraska, 1887.)

1. John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,
 John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,
 John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,
 But his soul goes marching on.

Chorus.

Glory, glory hallelujah,
 Glory, glory hallelujah,
 Glory, glory hallelujah,
 His soul goes marching on.

2. Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
 Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
 Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
 As we go marching on.

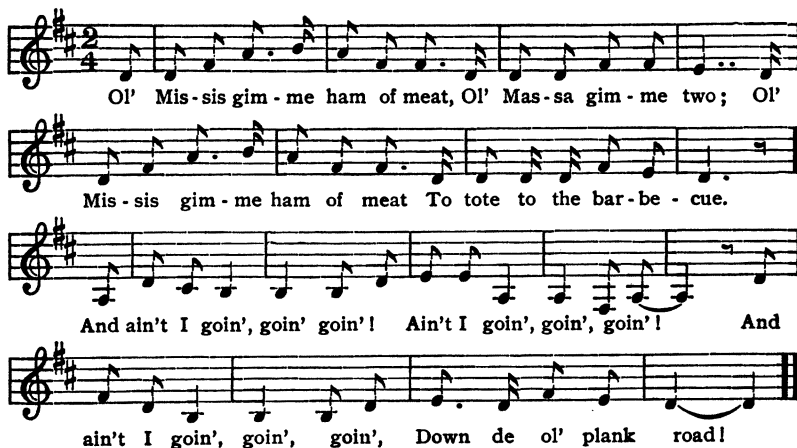
Chorus.

3. John Brown's baby has a wart upon its nose, etc.
4. Hang your regards in the middle of the yard, etc.
5. The old whiskey bottle lies empty on the shelf, etc.

¹ Newell, Games and Songs of American Children, No. 22, has a different tune.

II. AIN'T I GOIN'.¹

(Brought from Arkansas to Western Nebraska, 1882.)



Ol' Mis-sis gim-me ham of meat, Ol' Mas-sa gim-me two; Ol'
 Mis-sis gim-me ham of meat To tote to the bar-be-cue.
 And ain't I goin', goin' goin'! Ain't I goin', goin', goin'! And
 ain't I goin', goin', goin', Down de ol' plank road!

1. Ol' Missis gimme ham of meat,
 Ol' Massa gimme two;
 Ol' Missis gimme ham of meat
 To tote to the barbecue.
 And ain't I goin', agoin', agoin'!
 Ain't I goin', goin', goin'!
 Ain't I goin', goin', goin'!
 Down de ol' plank road.
2. Lizy Jane am a fine ol' gal,
 Eyes as black as jet;
 I always tried to marry her,
 Never come it yet.
 So get along home, Si and a Cindy!
 Get along home, Si and a Cindy!
 Get along home, Si and a Cindy!
 Take your time and go.
3. If I was gwine to trabbel,
 I'd trabbel dis worl' roun';
 If I was gwine to marry,
 I'd marry Manthy Brown.
 So get along home, etc.
4. O, you can ride the old gray hoss,
 And I will ride the roan,
 You can play with your sweetheart,
 But let my gal alone.
 O, ain't I goin', etc.

¹ Mrs. L. D. Ames, "The Missouri Play-Party" (this Journal, vol. xxiv, pp. 299-300), gives another version.

5. O, if I had a scolding wife,
 As sure as you are born,
 I'd take her down to New Orleans,
 And trade her off for corn.
 So get along home, etc.

Sometimes one refrain, sometimes the other, was used. The tune is reminiscent of "Lucy Long," a negro-minstrel piece popular fifty years ago. I insert one of its stanzas and the chorus for comparison with Stanza 5 as given above.

[From the "Rosebud Songster."]

O, if I had a scolding wife, I'd whip her sure's you're born,
 I'd take her down to New Orleans and trade her off for corn.

So take your time, Miss Lucy,
 Take your time, Miss Lucy Long;
 Take your time, Miss Lucy,
 O Lucy, Lucy Long!

From the dialect, negro origin may be inferred for Stanzas 1 and 3. Its persistence may be due to the idiosyncrasies of the singer,—a white boy who had lived in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri.

12. KILMACRANKIE.¹

(Western Iowa, 1905; tune, "Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley grows.")

1. Kilmacrankie is my song,
 I sing and dance it all along,
 From the heel and to the toe,
 Kilmacrankie, here we go!
2. If you had been where I have been,
 And seen the sights that I have seen,
 Four and twenty Irish girls,
 Dancing on a sheep skin!

¹ MacQuoid, *Jacobite Songs and Ballads*, "Killicrankie," second set, first stanza and chorus:

"Where ha'e ye been sae braw, lad?
 Where ha'e ye been sae brankie, O?
 Where ha'e ye been sae braw, lad?
 Came ye by Killicrankie, O?"

"An' ye had been where I hae been,
 Ye wadna been sae cantie, O;
 An' ye had seen what I ha'e seen,
 I' the braes o' Killicrankie, O."

See also Burns, "Where Hae ye been sae braw, Lad?"

Goldy M. Hamilton (this *Journal*, vol. xxvii, p. 297) gives, under the title "Crinny my Cranky," a version of the first stanza.

3. It's farewell Daddy, farewell Mammy,
Farewell little Frankie;
Every time I go to mill,
I think of Kilmacrankie.

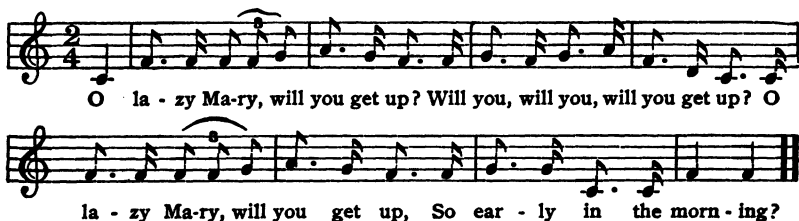
13. OATS, PEAS, BEANS, AND BARLEY.¹

(Illinois, 1893.)

1. Oats, peas, beans, and barley grows,
Oats, peas, beans, and barley grows;
You, nor I, nor nobody knows
How oats, peas, beans, and barley grows.
2. Thus the farmer sows his seed,
Thus he stands to take his heed,
Stamps his foot and claps his hand,
Turns around to view the land,
Waiting for a partner,
Waiting for a partner;
Open the ring, choose one in,
Kiss her when you get her in.
3. Now you've married you must obey,
You must be true to all you say;
Live together all your life,
I pronounce you man and wife.
4. O, goodness gracious, what have I done!
I've married the father instead of the son!
His face is as black as an old tin can!
O, goodness gracious, what a man!

14. LAZY MARY.²

(Western Nebraska, 1883.)



1. O lazy Mary, will you get up?
Will you, will you, will you get up?
O Lazy Mary, will you get up,
So early in the morning?
2. O no, dear mother, I won't get up,
I won't, I won't, I won't get up.
O no, dear mother, I won't get up
So early in the morning.

¹ Newell, Games and Songs of American Children, No. 21; Gomme, II, 1-13.

² Newell, Games and Songs of American Children, No. 32, has a different tune.

3. O what'll you give me for my breakfast?
For my, for my, for my breakfast,
O what'll you give me for my breakfast,
So early in the morning.
4. A little bowl of bread and milk,
Bread and milk, bread and milk,
A little bowl of bread and milk,
So early in the morning.
5. O then, dear mother, I won't get up,
I won't, I won't, I won't get up,
O then, dear mother, I won't get up,
So early in the morning.
6. A nice young man with rosy cheeks,
With rosy, rosy, rosy cheeks,
A nice young man with rosy cheeks,
So early in the morning.
7. O then, dear mother, I will get up,
I will, I will, I will get up,
O then, dear mother, I will get up,
So early in the morning.

Mary, at the beginning of the game, sits in a chair within the ring, which moves until she makes her choice. At the end of Stanza 7 the young man enters the ring, kisses Mary, and takes her place in the chair, after which all sing, —

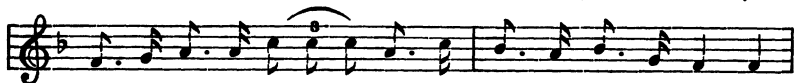
"O, lazy Roger, will you get up," etc.

15. LITTLE RED ROSE.

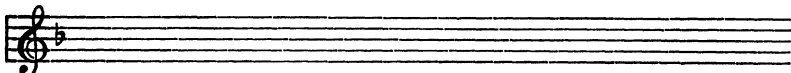
(Western Nebraska, 1883; brought from Arkansas.)



And now we've got the little red rose, The little red rose, the little red rose; And



now we've got the lit - tle red rose, So ear - ly in the morn - ing.



(Words and music forgotten.)



Go choose you out a part - ner, The pret - ti - est you can find.

1. And now we've got the little red rose,
The little red rose, the little red rose;
And now we've got the little red rose,
So early in the morning.

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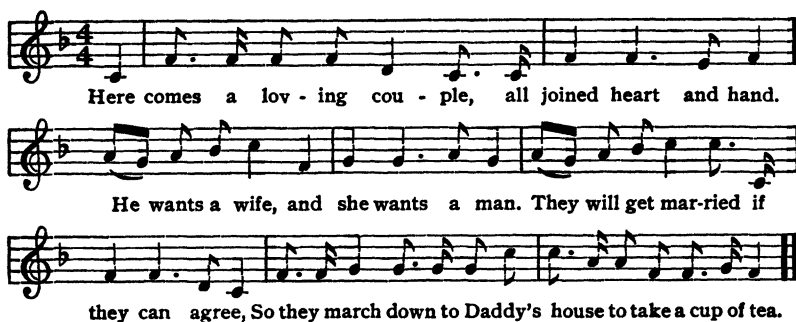
Go choose you out a partner
The prettiest you can find.

2. And now we've got the whiskey jug, etc.
3. And now we've got the lily so fair, etc.
4. And now we've got the old plough horse, etc.
5. And now we've got the violet blue, etc.
6. And now we've got old stick-in-the-mud, etc.

When these stock stanzas are exhausted, improvisation fits some nickname verse upon each remaining player, the girls receiving compliments, the boys satire.

16. LOVING COUPLE.²

(Western Nebraska, 1883.)



1. Here comes a loving couple, all joined heart and hand,
He wants a wife and she wants a man.
They will get married if they can agree,
So they march down to daddy's house to take a cup of tea.
2. Now they are married, and sad yet 'tis true,
Off to the wars in great haste he must go.
Weeping and wailing, O this shall be my cry,
If I never see my true love I fear I shall die.

¹ Words forgotten.

² See Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, No. 10, for an older version.

3. O yonder comes my true love, and how do you do?
 Where have you been since I last saw you?
 The wars are all over, we're free from all harm;
 Will the company oblige us by the raising of their arms.

17. SKIP TO MY LOU.¹

(Western Nebraska, 1888.)

1. I lost my pardner, what'll I do?
 I lost my pardner, what'll I do?
 I lost my pardner, what'll I do?
 Skip to my Lou, my darling!

 Gone again, skip to my Lou!
 Gone again, skip to my Lou!
 Gone again, skip to my Lou!
 Skip to my Lou, my darling!
2. I'll get another one better than you, etc.
3. If you can't get a white girl, a black girl'll do, etc.
4. If you can't get a red bird, a black bird'll do, etc.
5. I'll get her back again, you bet you! etc.
6. Pigs in the tater patch, two by two, etc.
7. Gone again, and I don't care, etc.
8. I'll get another one sweeter than you, etc.
9. My Ma says, I can have you, etc.
10. Rats in the bread-pan, chew, chew, chew, etc.
11. Some folks say that a nigger won't steal, etc.
12. I caught a nigger in my cornfield, etc.
13. Rats in the sugar-bowl, two by two, etc.
14. My fellow wears a number 'leven shoe, etc.
15. Dad's old shoes'll never fit you, etc.
16. Chicken on the haystack, shoo, shoo, shoo, etc.
17. Little red wagon painted blue, etc.
18. Stands like a fool, what'll I do? etc.

¹ Mrs. Ames ("The Missouri Play-Party," this Journal, vol. xxiv) prints this song with the music. The resemblance of "Skip to my Lou" to the first part of the tune of "Pov' Piti Lolotte," printed by Krehbiel in *Afro-American Folksongs*, seems worth noting.

Though the "forty verses" of "Skip to My Lou" were current in western Nebraska, I cannot be sure of having heard them all at one time. That improvisation and adaptation were encouraged, witness the final stanza, directed at the leader whenever his silence awkwardly halted the game. The ease with which any one could fashion the nonsense line quickly gave satisfying length to the song. It was this feature, I believe, which made it so widely popular. In any neighborhood "Skip to my Lou" became one of the six or eight ring-games. "Tansy O," with as lively a tune, suffered from a monotony which, apparently, no one was tempted to relieve by improvisation.

18. MEXICO.

(Western Kansas, 1905; tune, variant of "Skip to my Lou.")

1. There was a little war in Mexico,
Mexico, Mexico,
There was a little war in Mexico,
Long time ago.

(Spoken.)

Come to the place where the blood was shed,
Gents turn around and ladies go ahead.

2. When we meet we'll dance and sing,
Dance and sing, dance and sing.
When we meet we'll dance and sing.
Tra la li la.

19. SAILOR.

(Western Iowa, 1900; tune, variant of "Come, Philander!")

1. What shall we do with the drunken sailor?
What shall we do with the drunken sailor?
What shall we do with the drunken sailor?
Sailor, sailor, sailor.
2. Put him in the steamer, and he'll sail over,
Put him in the steamer, and he'll sail over,
Put him in the steamer, and he'll sail over.
Over, over, over.

The first stanza belongs to a well-known chanty.

20. THERE'S A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

(Montana, 1914.)

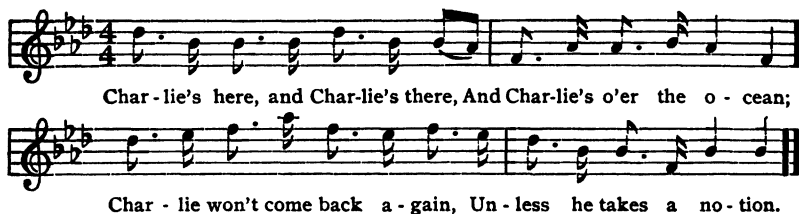
1. There's a light in the window,
There's a light in the window,
There's a light in the window for me.

2. There's somebody waiting, waiting,
There's somebody waiting, waiting,
There's somebody waiting, waiting, for me.
3. Swing the one, leave the other,
Swing the one, leave the other,
Swing the one, leave the other for me.

21. THE WIND BLOWS HIGH.¹

(Illinois, 1898.)

1. The wind blows high, the wind blows cool,
Stars are gathering to and fro;
Miss ——— says she'll die,
Couldn't get a fellow with a dark blue eye.
2. She is handsome, she is pretty,
She is the belle of New York City;
She has lovers one, two, three,
Please come and tell me who they be.
3. ——— says he loves her;
All the boys are fighting for her,
Let them fight as long's they will,
————— has her still.

22. WEEVILLY WHEAT.²

A.

(Eastern Nebraska, 1870; brought from Canada.)

1. Over the river to get the wheat,
Over the river the barley;
Over the river to get the wheat,
To bake a cake for Charley.

Chorus.

And I don't want none of your weevilly wheat,
And I don't want none of your barley;
But I'll take the very best of wheat,
And bake a cake for Charley.

¹ See Alice B. Gomme, *Dictionary of British Folk-Lore, and Traditional Games*, vol. ii, p. 387, for other versions.

² In one version in Iowa, "Waverly Wheat."

2. Charley he's a fine young man,
Charley he's a dandy;
Charley likes to kiss the girls,
And feed them lots of candy.
3. Charlie's here, and Charlie's there,
And Charlie's over the ocean;
Charlie won't come back again,
Unless he takes a notion.

B.

(Western Nebraska, 1882; brought from Arkansas.)

Over the river to get the wheat,
Soon in the morning early;
Heart and hand I give to thee,
'Tis true I love you dearly.

Chorus.

And I don't want none of your weevilly wheat,
And I don't want none of your barley;
But I'll take some flour and a half an hour,
And bake a cake for Charley.

2. O don't you see that pretty little girl?
Don't you think she's clever?
Don't you think that I and her
Would make a match forever?
3. I love to sing, and I love to dance,
I love to keep in motion;
I love to kiss a pretty girl,
A making such commotion.
4. Christmas comes but once a year,
Why not all be merry?
Sitting round the old log fire
A drinking Tom and Jerry.

C.¹

(Western Iowa, 1899.)

1. Over the river to feed my sheep,
Over the river to Charley;
Over the river to feed my sheep,
And measure out my barley.
2. Charley he's a fine young man
Charley he's a dandy,
Charley likes to swing the girls,
And feed them sorghum candy.

¹ Version C has the heading "Over the River to Charley."

D.¹

(Montana, 1914.)

1. Dont you see that nice young man?
Don't you think he's clever?
Don't you think that him and her
Will always live together?

Chorus.

Rolly, Rolly, Rolly, Roll,
Rolly, Rolly, Rolly,
Rolly, Rolly, Rolly, Roll,
Rolly, Rolly, Rolly.

2. Don't you see that nice young girl?
Don't you think she's a beauty?
Marching through the promised land,
Like a shining beauty.
3. We love to sing, and we love to dance,
We love to keep in motion,
We love to join the biggest band
That ever crossed the ocean.

The "Weevilly Wheat" version from Canada was traditional near Woodstock about 1850. That from Arkansas was brought to western Nebraska in 1882. The Iowa version was in use about 1899. "Rolly, Rolly," came from Montana in 1914. As I did not hear it sung, I do not know that it follows the tune of the others. The air for the other versions is a variation of that which I have heard used for Lady Nairne's "Who'll be King but Charlie?" and is not the same as that given by Mrs. Ames.²

Apparently it is really "Royal Charlie" who is "here" and "there" and "over the ocean." The folk are eager for his coming, and will bake him cakes, not of barley, but of the finest wheat flour.

II.

The songs grouped under Section II show direct influences from quadrilles and other dances.

23. HEEL AND TOE POLKA.

A.

(Western Nebraska, 1883.)

1. First your heel, and then your toe,
That's the way to polkay, O.
First your heel, and then your toe,
That's the way to polkay, O.

¹ Known as "Rölly, Rölly."² This Journal, vol. xxiv, p. 302.

Chorus.

Tra la, tra la, tra la la le la,
Tra la la le la, tra la la le la,
Tra la, tra la, tra la la le la,
Tra la la le la, le la la la.

2. Buckskin fiddle and a shoestring bow,
Makes the very best music you know.
Buckskin fiddle and a shoestring bow,
Makes the very best music you know.
3. I'll sell my fiddle and I'll sell my bow,
I'll dress my wife in calico.
I'll sell my fiddle and I'll sell my bow,
I'll dress my wife in calico.
4. Heel and toe, and a one, two, three,
Heel and toe, and a one, two, three,
Heel and toe, and a one, two, three,
Heel and toe, and a one, two, three.

B.

(Western Iowa, 1900.)

1. First your heel, and then your toe,
And I'll take sugar in my coffee, O.
2. How do you think my mammy knows,
I take sugar in my coffee, O.
3. Cornstock fiddle and a shoestring bow,
And I take sugar in my coffee, O.
4. Sugar's high and coffee's low,
And I take sugar in my coffee, O.

The music for Version B and for the words of Version A varies but slightly from that printed by Mrs. Ames under the title "I'll come back and be your Beau,"¹ and represents a simplification of the first half of the "Heel and Toe Polka." When I heard Version A, it was sung, in the absence of instrumental music, to accompany that dance. With the refrain the dancers began to swing, and the music entered upon a lively change.

24. MEET HALF WAY.

A.

(Western Iowa, 1900.)

1. Meet half way to your best liking,
Meet half way to your best liking,
Meet half way to your best liking,
For she's a darling.

¹ This Journal, vol. xxiv, p. 312.

2. Right hand around to your best liking, etc.
3. Left hand round, etc.
4. Both hands round, etc.
5. Do-si-do,¹ etc.
6. Promenade around, etc.

B.

(Additional verses, Nebraska, 1908.)

6. Down the middle to your best liking,
Down the middle to your best liking,
Down the middle to your best liking,
You're the one, my darling.
7. Wheel and turn the little horse wagon, etc.

The music and the figures are traditional with the Virginia reel; indeed, the figures are descended from the Sir Roger de Coverley. A variation of the tune is used for "Old Brass Wagon," and is here printed with the words of that game.

Connection² of the two songs is further evident in identity of refrain. Perhaps Stanza 7 in version B of "Meet Half Way" affords the clew. Its words may have been suggested by the reverse turns, in the promenade figure, of the opposing lines of men and women.

25. OLD BRASS WAGON.³

(Western Nebraska, 1887.)

Lead 'er up and down the old brass wag - on,

Lead 'er up and down the old brass wag - on,

Three wheels off and the ax - le drag - gin', You're the one, my dar - ling.

Lead'er up and down the old brass wagon,
Lead'er up and down the old brass wagon,
Three wheels off and the axle draggin',
You're the one, my darling.

¹ Dos-a-dos, a quadrille-call.

² Goldy M. Hamilton, in "The Play-Party in Northeast Missouri" (this Journal, vol. xxvii, pp. 293 and 298), prints versions which show further relations of the two songs.

³ Mrs. L. D. Ames ("The Missouri Play-Party," this Journal, vol. xxiv, p. 307) prints a version of "Old Brass Wagon" with a slightly different tune.

Stop and grease the old brass wagon,
Stop and grease the old brass wagon,
Three wheels off and the axle draggin',
You're the one, my darling.

26. MICHIGAN GIRLS.¹

(Michigan, 1883.)

Michigan girls, on you I call,
The invitation is to ail;
The way is broad, the road is clear,
Michigan girls, come volunteer.

27. GRANGER.

(Western Iowa, 1906; tune, "Pig in the Parlor.")

I long to be a granger,
A granger, a granger,
I long to be a granger,
And with the grangers stand.
With a corncrib on my shoulder,
My shoulder, my shoulder,
A corncrib on my shoulder,
And a pitchfork in my hand.

Your honors to your right,
Your honors to your left,
Swing the one you honor first,
And promenade with the left.

28. PIG IN THE PARLOR.

(Eastern Nebraska, 1879.)

1. My father and mother were Irish,
My father and mother were Irish,
My father and mother were Irish,
And I was Irish, too,
And I was Irish, too,
And I was Irish, too,
My father and mother were Irish,
And I was Irish, too.
2. They kept the pig in the parlor, etc.
3. They kept the cow in the kitchen, etc.
4. They kept the horse in the bedroom, etc.
5. We've got a new pig in the parlor, etc.
6. The same old pig in the parlor, etc.

¹ A Virginia reel.

7. Your right hand to your partner,
 Your left hand to your neighbor,
 Your right hand to your partner,
 And all promenade,
 And all promenade,
 And all promenade,
 Your right hand to your partner,
 And all promenade.

29. OLD DAN TUCKER.¹

(Eastern Nebraska, 1878.)

1. Old Dan Tucker's back in town,
 He swings those ladies all around;
 First to the right, and then to the left,
 And then to the one that you love best.

Chorus.

Get out of the way for Old Dan Tucker,
 You're too late to get your supper.
 Supper's over, breakfast's frying,
 Old Dan Tucker stands there crying.

2. Old Dan Tucker's a queer old man,
 He washed his face in the frying pan,
 He combed his hair with a wagon wheel,
 And died of the toothache in his heel.
3. Old Dan Tucker he got drunk,
 He stepped in the fire and kicked up a chunk,
 He got a cinder in his shoe, —
 Lordy me, how the ashes flew!
4. Old Dan Tucker's a fine old man,
 He used to ride our Darby ram;
 He sent him whizzing down the hill,
 If he hadn't got up, he'd laid there still.

Of the thirty negro-minstrel stanzas, two—the “Cinder” and the “Darby Ram”—survive with the chorus in the game-song. The dialect, as might be expected, has completely fallen away. For the game which resembles “Miller Boy” and “Pig in the Parlor,” the dance directions would be,—

“Balance; swing partners; grand right and left; promenade.”

At the third call, Dan Tucker, the solitary, enters the chain of players to select a partner.

¹ Mrs. L. D. Ames (“The Missouri Play-Party,” this *Journal*, vol. xxiv, p. 309) gives another version.

30. CAPTAIN JINKS.¹

(Western Iowa, 1906.)

1. Captain Jinks comes home at night,
Clap your hands with all your might,
Salute your pardners left and right,
For that's the style in the army.
Join your hands and forward all,
Forward all, forward all.
Join your hands and forward all,
For that's the style in the army.
2. Captain Jinks comes home at night,
Gentleman passes to the right,
Swings his pardner once and a half,
And all promenade.
All promenade,
All promenade,
Swings his pardner once and a half,
And all promenade.

31. BUFFALO GALS.

A.

(Western Nebraska, 1884.)

1. First lady swing with the right hand gent,
With the right hand round, with the right hand round,
Partner with the left, and the left hand round,—
Lady in the centre and seven hands round.
Buffalo gals ain't you comin' out to-night,
Ain't you comin' out to-night, ain't you comin' out to-night?
Lady swing out and the gent swing in,
Join your hands and go round again,
All of the gals are a comin' out to-night,
Are a comin' out to-night, are a comin' out to-night,
All of the gals are a comin' out to-night,
To dance by the light of the moon.
2. Second lady, etc.

B.

(Western Iowa, 1905.)

1. First young gent all around inside,
All around inside, all around inside!
First young gent all around inside,
And balance to your partner.

Chorus.

Swing your partners all run away,
All run away, all run away!

¹ Mrs. L. D. Ames ("The Missouri Play-Party," this Journal, vol. xxiv, p. 308) gives another call to this song.

Swing your partners all run away,
And throw her on the corner.¹

2. Next young gent, etc.

32. THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.

A.

(Western Nebraska, 1882; brought from Arkansas.)

1. I'm lonesome since I crossed the hills,
And come over the hills and valleys;
I think I'd better go back and see
The girl I left behind me.

Chorus.

O swing that girl, that pretty little girl,
The girl I left behind me;
O swing that girl, that pretty little girl,
The girl I left behind me.

2. If ever I again go near that place,
And the tears don't fall and blind me,
I'll take my way straight home again,
To the girl I left behind me.

O swing that girl that pretty little girl,
The girl I left behind me;
She's pretty in the face, and neat around the waist,
The girl I left behind me.

3. And when this cruel war is o'er,
And the Lincoln boys unbind me,
I'll seek my love, and part no more,
From the girl I left behind me.

O swing, etc.

B.

(Iowa, 1890.)

First couple out to the couple on the right
And balance there so kindly;
And pass right through, and balance too,
And swing the girl behind you.

33. ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

.
.

Sing whack ti O li, ti O lo, ti ling daddy O,
Whack ti O li, ti O lo, ti ling day.

Lady to right
And dance in the ring;

¹ "The corner" is the position on the opposite hand from partner.

When you have danced, O then you may swing;
 When you have swung,
 Remember the call,
 Join your hands and promenade all.

.

Some lines have escaped me. The first two made some statement about dancing all night; the last lines repeated nonsense syllables after the fashion of a refrain.

Our group of texts in Section II show something of the direct influence of the dance upon the singing-games. The square dances had accumulated a rich store of popular melodies, and afforded a wealth of evolutions. In this field the play-party folk might easily have made goodly prize. Instead they seem to have seized blindly that which came first to hand. This was natural, for the play-party group acted on impulse rather than plan, and there was no one to think out the necessary modifications. Yet at times, as in "Meet Half Way," some one faced and solved the problem. This game borrows the Virginia-reel music, and, by weaving a stanza about each dance-call, gives clear directions for the whole complicated pattern of the reel. More commonly, however, as in the case of the "Heel and Toe" polka, the party folk simply carried over tune and verses.

Formations requiring fixed numbers and complex evolutions held the quadrille from passing directly to the play-party. The games demanded a simple movement in which a varying company could take part. In this connection "Pig in the Parlor" and "Old Dan Tucker" may deserve notice. Although "calls" now mark some stanzas in each song, I do not know in which field the tunes, familiar at dances as at the play-party, found the earlier usage. The game movements for the two are so simple that the player could scarcely go wrong; the quadrille figures would have halted in confusion without a caller. I cannot find that either game sought to better its movement by imitating the dance sequence common with its tune. Nor can I hear that "St. Patrick's Day," though its tune and rhymed call would seem to offer temptation, was ever borrowed by the play-party. The adaptation would have been easy, but there was no one to give forethought to the changes.

Somehow the adaptation needed in the quadrilles, "Captain Jinks," "Buffalo Gals," and "The Girl I left Behind Me," were made. "Captain Jinks" brought the play-party a sixteen-line call

for a complicated movement.¹ Hardly a word of the old popular song remains; the directions fill the verses, and the players may step confidently.

It is perhaps by mere chance that the play-party has not appropriated "Buffalo Gals" in the rhymed call of Version A. There was, in general, no great opportunity for such loans, since the quadrille usually made of the singing-game an outcast and a wanderer. The folk who played Version B did know its rightful name. It sacrificed all the old verses to dancing-directions, but it gave the play-party a simple movement with this happy tune.²

The first four lines of Version A of "The Girl I left Behind Me" formed an accompaniment to a "grand right and left" figure. The purpose of this movement was to bring about change of partners. The swinging was followed by the "promenade." A return to original partners brought the game to an end. Version B, though called a dance by those who took part, was really a singing-game, for it had only voice accompaniment. The person who gave it to me could not remember the four lines needed to complete the tune.

Careful search would no doubt show other rhymed dance-calls used for games; what we have, however, will suffice. It is clear that the games impulsively borrowed from the dance, by whole and by piecemeal. The existence of two widely diverse game-forms with one quadrille tune shows the appetite of the play-party for the dance. It points likewise to the local nature of the loan. Had either form gained currency, the other would have been in the way. Had quadrille and play-party remained longer in contact, these game-forms might have acquired bulk and stability; but the play-party fled to secluded nooks, and the quadrille itself vanished from the dancing-floor. To-day, more than ever, the game-song seems mean and worthless. It possesses no abiding-place, has turned gipsy, a swapper, "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles." It robs hymn and negro-minstrel piece, and seizes scraps and crumbs from college glee and popular song. Even Mother Goose must pay tribute. The spirit which improvises the tender images for "Skip to My Lou" and "John Brown's Body" is giddy and clownish. Perhaps the childish devotees of King William, in

" Upon his breast he wore a star,
And in his mouth a big cigar,"

¹ Mrs. Ames gives a wholly different twelve-line version, which lacks verses to accompany the promenade figure. Her last four lines seem based upon the rhymed call which I name "St. Patrick's Day," because I learned it with that tune.

² Goldy M. Hamilton, in "The Play-Party in Northeast Missouri" (this *Journal*, vol. xxvii, pp. 289-303), gives versions of "Buffalo Gals" and "The Girl I left Behind Me," in which the dance-calls have been made over into game-song stanzas. A number of other songs there printed show the adaptation of quadrille-calls.

sought to be clear rather than facetious. As to the old line, words and meaning are yet under dispute. But it is irresponsibility which, by substituting

“ Poor old Sam was sent to jail,
He hung his hat on a ten-penny nail,”

for the older words in “Hi, Come Along,” established a local version. Doubtless relief from monotony was sought. Against such forces the traditional forms endure as well as can be expected. The patch of new cloth may seem worse than none; but impulse, heedless and non-critical, busily pieces out the tattered and insufficient garment.

On the writer's part, collection of game-songs has been occasional and accidental. His list now contains more than eighty. Most of the songs are widely distributed. Of the following he has found only isolated instances: “A. B. C.,” “Fine Brick House,” “Kilmacrankie,” “Little Red Rose,” “Here sits a Young Man,” “There's a Light in the Window,” “Girl I left Behind Me” (B), “Buffalo Gals” (B).

Date and locality as given in this article merely indicate a particular rendering. They are given because they may help in distinguishing recent and local versions from older forms. Apparently half the play-party songs now in use were unknown in that rôle forty years ago. Parody and borrowing, adaptation and improvisation, have added a miscellany.

IOWA CITY, IO.